

STATE OF VERMONT Agency of Administration		
<b>STANDARD</b>  <b>STC</b>  <b>State Technology Collaborative</b>	<b>ORIGINAL POLICY ADOPTED BY STC</b>  <b>DATE:</b>	<b>ORIGINAL POLICY NUMBER</b>
	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b> <b>3/1/06</b>	<b>ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS</b> Policy for Web Look and Feel of Vermont Web Sites

STATUTORY REFERENCE

OR OTHER AUTHORITY: Web Look and Feel Policy

APPROVAL DATE:

APPROVED BY: **Secretary of Administration**

POLICY TITLE: **Web Look and Feel Standards (V 1.1)**

POLICY STATEMENT:

## **Introduction**

These standards for the look and feel of Vermont State web pages are designed to make State of Vermont websites more accessible, user-friendly and compliant with generally accepted web standards on a worldwide basis.

### **1.1 Definitions**

- 1.1.1 **Non-graphic font** - The font applied to text characters on a web page, as opposed to characters that are part of a graphic element.
- 1.1.2 **Standard** – In this document the word standard is used to mean “required element of the state look and feel policy implementation.”
- 1.1.3 **Base Domain** – The root page of a given organization’s Web site.
- 1.1.4 **Home Page** – The page that appears when the base domain name is entered into a web browser.
- 1.1.5 **Promotional Web Site** – A site designated by the Web Taskforce as having a primarily promotional mission.

### **1.2 Web Site Design Standards**

- 1.2.1 **Color** - A website is one channel of communication with an audience and should be designed to be consistent with the complete family of communication materials. The color used within a website should be a reflection of the color used to identify the state entity or program in all media. The State Brand Standards & Guidelines offer a range of color options that form a major part of the state brand identity. Color should also be used consistently throughout the entire site (e.g. header, navigation, titles, body, fonts, color and general design should have consistent formatting and colors on all site pages to provide ease of navigation.)
- 1.2.2 **Font** – It is recommended that the body text within every state web page be presented in a sans-serif font. The sans-serif fonts that should be included are Arial, Helvetica and Verdana. Though less accessible to vision impaired users, serif fonts may be used for a site with a comprehensive graphical design where san-serif fonts would detract from the overall effect. The serif fonts that are preferred are Garamond, Georgia, and Palatino.  
  
The six fonts listed above are standard to most systems and should be considered the default fonts throughout Vermont State web pages. Additional common sans serif fonts may be used provided the preferred fonts are listed as secondary options within a prioritized list (CSS Font Family attributes).
- 1.2.3 **Font Size of Non-Graphic Text** – Every state web site will use a font sized to approximate the equivalent of 10 point Arial on a 800X600 pixel display for body text. Header text will be noticeably larger than body text.
- 1.2.4 **Readability** - Background colors can easily render a web page unreadable by some members of the usership. Therefore, background colors will be avoided for body text that will, in most cases, be presented as black text on a white background. When deemed necessary, background and heading color may be used. If using a background color no more than 5% saturation should be used. The color chosen should be muted and in harmony with the color scheme of the site. The Chief Marketing Officer’s office will maintain a set of color palettes that will include acceptable colors for use as backgrounds to body text and headings.

- 1.2.5 **Page Design** – The home page of every state site should display all navigation without vertical scrolling being necessary. In some situations this may not be possible but every effort should be made to achieve this goal. This does not apply to any pages other than the home page.
- 1.2.6 **Banner** – The top 70 pixels of every page will be taken up by the site banner. The banner will include the “Moon over the Mountains” logo, the title of the site and the Vermont.gov link to the portal site. Specifications for each of these are available below. The background of the banner area will be left to the discretion of the sponsoring organization and may be either a background color or graphic.
- 1.2.6.1 **Vermont State Logo** – Every state site will have the “Moon over the Mountains” logo placed on the left-hand side of the banner. This logo will link back to the home page of the current site. Two standard versions of the logo will be created for web use one for light and one for dark backgrounds. These graphics will be 50 pixels tall. The logo should be centered vertically in the banner and approximately 10 pixels from the left edge of the banner.
- 1.2.6.2 **Title** – The title of every state web site will consist of two parts, the name of the site and the agency or department that oversees the organization producing the site. (For example, “Office of Child Support, Agency of Human Services” or “Vermont Emergency Management, Department of Public Safety” or for top level sites “Agency of Administration, State of Vermont.”) Sites sponsored by a state organization but not directly owned by said organization may begin the second line of the title with the words, “Sponsored by” or “Hosted by.” (An example being “Vermont Information Consortium, Sponsored by the Office of the CIO”)
- 1.2.6.3 The site title will be the equivalent of 24 point Ariel on a 800X600 pixel display and the agency or department name will be the equivalent of 10 point Ariel on a 800X600 pixel display. The agency or department name will share a baseline with the vertical arrangement of the “Moon over the Mountains” logo (the logo is available through the Chief Marketing Officer’s Office.) The Site name will appear approximately 5 pixels above this. Both lines will be left justified. The font size of the site name may be adjusted downward if the name is unusually long and must wrap.
- 1.2.7 **Secondary Banner** – “Promotional” sites may use a second Banner. This banner will appear directly below the title bar and will extend the entire width of the page. If this banner is used the left navigation will appear directly below the Secondary Banner. The height of this banner will be at the discretion of the page owner but should not exceed 200 pixels.
- 1.2.8 **Top Navigation** – A fixed width bar will appear directly below the banner on every state web site. The default color for the bar will be PMS Warm gray 8 (#A19589 hex or 161/149/137 RGB). Other colors of similar intensity may be used if they conform to the overall color scheme of the site. There will be a required link at the far left of this bar to the portal site. The search box shall appear at the far right and include options to search the current site and for all state sites. The remainder of the bar will be available for site-specific links.
- 1.2.9 **Left-hand navigation** – According to usability studies, Internet users are accustomed to navigating through a site using links located on the left side of the screen. This will be the standard for every state web site. The text used in this area, whether text or graphic based, will be presented in the standard non-graphic fonts.
- 1.2.10 **Agency Logos** – Official agency logos may be displayed on all site pages in the left-hand navigation bar at the bottom. These may not be displayed anywhere else on the site except in the body section where appropriate.

- 1.2.11 **Right-hand Navigation** – Right-hand navigation is not required on state web sites. If used the navigation will appear on the rightmost 20% but not less than 150 pixels of the web page. The font for right-hand navigation must be the standard non-graphic font and at least the equivalent of 8 point Arial on a 800X600 pixel display.
- 1.2.12 **Footer** – The footer for every state web site will be of a standard format to give users surety that they are dealing with an official Vermont State Government website or affiliate. The footer will occupy a fixed pixel size at the bottom of the screen that will accommodate the content requirements of the site. The footer will include links to the state Accessibility Policy, Privacy Policy, Web Security Statement, Copyright Information, and a link to Vermont.gov. There will also be text reading, “A Vermont Government Website” and “Copyright 20xx State of Vermont.” The footer may also include other non-navigational links as desired or needed.
- 1.2.13 **Standard Page Components**
- 1.2.13.1 **Home Page Link** – The “Moon over the Mountains” logo and site title in the banner will both link back to the site’s home page.
- 1.2.13.2 **Agency Information** – For consistency every site will have an “about” section that describes the function of the agency and its services.
- 1.2.13.3 **Contact Information** – Every site must contain contact information including but not limited to: emails, phone numbers and street addresses for the agency. The site must also contain contact information for users having accessibility problems.
- 1.2.13.4 **Naming Conventions** – Common links across state websites should be referred to in a consistent basis. This list will be amended as the need arises.
- 1.2.13.4.1 **Site Map** – page showing logical flowchart of the site
- 1.2.13.4.2 **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)** – A list of common questions and answers particular to the organization.
- 1.2.14 **Page Formatting**
- 1.2.14.1 **Page Width** – Agency web pages must be viewable without horizontal scrolling on an 800 X 600-pixel screen display. Pages that stretch horizontally to better display in higher resolutions are strongly encouraged. If a page is not designed to stretch to a larger screen size then the page must be coded to center itself on higher resolution displays.
- 1.2.14.2 **Page Areas** –
- 1.2.14.2.1 **Banner** – The page banner will occupy the top 70 pixels of each web page.
- 1.2.14.2.2 **Top Navigation** – The top navigation will appear directly beneath the banner.
- 1.2.14.2.3 **Left Navigation** – The left navigation will appear directly below the top navigation and occupy the left-most 20% but not less than 150 pixels of the Web page. Note: The left navigation is ideally limited to items that will appear above the fold on an 800x600 display.
- 1.2.14.2.4 **Right Navigation** – The right navigation appears directly below the top navigation and occupies the right most 20% but not less than 150 pixels of the Web page. Note: The right navigation is an optional element.
- 1.2.14.2.5 **Body** – The body occupies that space below the top navigation and between the left and right navigation areas (or right side of page if right navigation is not used). Ideally this area will expand to fill the display of any monitor with resolution set higher than 800x600 pixels.

1.2.14.2.6 **Footer** – The footer will occupy a fixed pixel size at the bottom of the screen that will accommodate the content requirements of the site. Note: Ideally this area will be visible without scrolling on the home page of every state Web site.

1.2.14.3 **Frames** – Frames shall not be used on state web sites. Screen readers are unable to read them intelligibly. W3C guidelines on frames and alternatives to frames are available from (<http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10-HTML-TECHS/#edef-NOFRAMES>).

### **1.3** Exemptions

1.3.1 Additional Standards will be developed to accommodate GIS based Web pages, application Web pages, mobile devices, and touch screen platforms. These additional standards may waive certain aspects of the Look and Feel Standards that are not consistent with the proper functioning of these types of specialty pages.

1.3.2 State of Vermont websites are required to adhere to established web standards for the purposes of consistency and accessibility. Due to the diversity in state Web use it is likely that exceptions to these standards will be necessary in certain cases. To accommodate this organizations may submit a request for an exemption from a web standard section, or element.

The request shall be submitted to the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) and must include specific reference to each standard section, sub-section, or part that the website wishes to deviate from and a written explanation justifying each deviation. The request should also include a description of the proposed alternative for each requested exemption. The CIO and CMO will be responsible for reviewing and approving requests for exemptions. Exemptions will be made on an individual basis and will apply only to the specific website described in the request.

**APPROVED**

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**Secretary of Administration**

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**Date**